

Language and Politics

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35.1 Performing politics

When thinking or talking about politics and political discourse, we usually regard political speeches as being the most salient genre (Ensink and Sauer, 2003; Chilton, 2004; Fairclough, 2006; Reisigl, 2006; 2008a, b; Wodak and De Cillia, 2007). Many speeches have become famous throughout the centuries (e.g., *I have a dream*, delivered by Martin Luther King, Jr. on 28 August 1963, at the Lincoln Memorial, Washington, DC (available at <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkhaveadream.htm>) or *Blood, Sweat and Tears*, one of the most famous calls-to-arms in history, delivered on 13 May 1940 by Sir Winston Churchill (available at: <http://www.historyplace.com/speeches/churchill.htm>).

Speeches are usually written by 'spin-doctors', but performed by the politicians themselves. Therefore, the audience and the media identify the particular speech with the speaker and her/his style (Pels and Corner, 2003), and usually do not ask who the author is (Goffman, 1981). Spin doctors have become ever more important, both as speech writers and in their role as 'mediators' (Laux and Schütz, 1996), linking the fields of politics, administration, media, and so forth. Spin is not a new phenomenon – politicians have always used persuasive strategies and tactics; in opposition, however, to British Prime Minister Tony Blair's policies relating to the war in Iraq, the notion of *spin* acquired negative connotations in the sense that politicians could not be trusted anymore (e.g., Alastair Campbell was said to have had huge power as a spin doctor when advising Tony Blair); indeed, if one believes recent opinion polls in the United Kingdom, a *politics without spin* is demanded by the majority of the population – a pipe dream!

In our daily lives, we are confronted with many other genres of political discourse apart from speeches, for example, in televised press conferences, in broadcast or televised interviews with politicians, in snippets on the Internet (e.g., YouTube), or in reports on political events in the press. Moreover, slogans and advertisements confront us when we are walking down the street, leaflets from political parties or interest groups are delivered by mail, and during election campaigns we are able to listen to politicians campaigning in town halls or at election rallies. Political parties have their own home pages, logos and brands; we are thus able to download relevant documents and photos as well

ADVANCES BOX 35.1

Politics and critical discourse analysis

Politics necessarily includes persuasion, rhetoric, deceptive devices, and so forth. It is wishful thinking and indeed wrong to believe that politics as a profession could be imagined without strategies or tactics, always depending on the interests of the respective political party. Hence it is not surprising that politicians make use of such discursive strategies. Critical researchers describe and deconstruct which devices are used in which function and in which way, where and when, and possibly why. It is obviously an issue of grading and scales, not a decision to either employ strategies or to not employ them. We also encounter a debate about the notion of 'lying' in politics. Research in pragmatics, **critical discourse analysis** and political science is tackling these important phenomena; e.g., Wodak (2007a, c) and Heywood (2004) for more information.

In the context of discourse and text analysis, critical certainly does not mean 'negative' (Wodak, 2007b). Critical social research and critical discourse analysis do not take common knowledge for granted but rather challenge such assumptions, thus opening up many more readings and options for interpretation, e.g., when analysing media texts or political discourses. Reisigl and Wodak (2001) distinguish between three levels of critique: **Text or discourse immanent critique** which detects inconsistencies, contradictions and fragmentations in the text itself; **socio-diagnostic critique** which relates the text to the text producers, their respective interests and the context of the text; and **prospective critique** which aims at proposing changes in discourse related to the two other levels (e.g., suggesting guidelines for non-discriminatory language) (see Fairclough, Chapter 30 in this volume). Below, I point to specific levels of critique when analysing extracts of political speeches.

In the image in Figure 35.1, we see (from left to right) President Abbas (Palestine), Prime Minister Blair (UK), and President Barroso (European Commission), responding to questions posed by journalists. All three have their own style related to a typical *habitus* of politicians when they are on *front stage* (eager, smiling, alert, serious and attentive). Observe the body gestures and mimics of the three politicians, which demonstrate all these mentioned characteristics.

35.2 Defining the field

35.2.1 Two definitions of 'politics'

The approaches of Aristotle and Machiavelli can be regarded as the two primary roots for the meaning of politics: ethics and morals, on the one hand, violence and hegemony, on the other:

Our purpose is to consider what form of political community is best of all for those who are most able to realize their ideal in life. We must therefore

examine not only this but other constitutions, both such as actually exist in well-governed states, and any theoretical forms which are held in esteem, so that what is good and useful may be brought to light.

(Aristotle, 1999, book II.1: 301)

The Aristotelian goal, to discover the best form of government, is thus clearly linked to definitions of ethics and morals, that is, values for a given society: what is believed to be 'good' or 'bad'. The definition of values always depends on the context and the political system: what might have been 'good' for a totalitarian state like Nazi Germany was certainly experienced as 'bad' for democratic systems. On the other hand, we find 'the dark view of political power'. All politics is of necessity driven by a quest for power, but power is inherently unpredictable, irresponsible, irrational and persuasive. This view has been articulated most prominently by Michel Foucault, yet its roots can be detected in many authors from Niccolò Machiavelli to Antonio Gramsci.

Paul Chilton has summarized the two opposing views very succinctly:

On the one hand, politics is viewed as a struggle for power, between those who seek to assert their power and those who seek to resist it. On the other hand, politics is viewed as cooperation, as the practices and institutions that a society has for resolving clashes of interest over money, influence, liberty, and the like.

(Chilton, 2004: 3)



Press conference, Barcelona, 25 November 2005, EMEDIATE Project Archive

FIGURE 35.1

35.2.2 A brief history of the field

Research in the field of language and politics has expanded enormously in recent years. Although this kind of research may seem to be quite 'young', rhetoric is one of the oldest academic disciplines and was already concerned with aspects of political communication in ancient times (see Holly, 1990: 6ff.) After the Second World War, Harold Lasswell and Nathan Leites (1949) published one of the most important studies on quantitative semantics in the field of language and politics, developing approaches from communication and mass media research. The famous economist Friedrich von Hayek (1968) discussed the impact of language on politics during his stay at the London School of Economics. In the late 1940s, research on the intricate links between language and politics began throughout Central Europe, though mainly in Germany (see below). The novel 1984 by George Orwell was a significant point of departure for the development of the entire field (see Chilton, 2006). Of course, all this research was influenced by the massive use of propaganda during the Second World War and in the emerging Cold War era, in the 1950s.

Political linguistics (*Politolinguistik*) was the first attempt to create an academic discipline for the research of political discourse (see Wodak and De Cillia, 2006, for an extensive overview). Klein (1998) argued that the 'linguistic study of political communication' should be defined as a subdiscipline of linguistics. He cited the critical linguistic research that began in the wake of National Socialism and which was conducted primarily by Victor Klemperer (1947; 2005) and Rolf Sternberger, Storz and Sußkind (1957) as having paved the way for the new discipline (Schmitz-Berning, 2000; Fairclough, Chapter 30 in this volume). Both Klemperer and Sternberger sampled, categorized and described the words used during the Nazi regime: many words had acquired new meanings, other words were forbidden (borrowed words from other languages, like *cigarette*), and neologisms (new words) were created; similar language policies were adopted by former communist totalitarian regimes (Wodak and Kirsch, 1995). Controlling language in this way implies an attempt to control (the minds and thoughts of) people. Because these early studies provoked criticism for being inadequate from the perspective of linguistic theory, a new methodological approach, '*Politolinguistik*', emerged in the late 1960s. It drew on various linguistic subdisciplines (pragmatics, text linguistics, media research).

Burkhardt (1996) proposed the use of 'political language' as the generic term comprising 'all types of public, institutional and private talks on political issues, all types of texts typical of politics as well as the use of lexical and stylistic linguistic instruments characterizing talks about political contexts'. From 1990 onwards, research on political discourse expanded, drawing on sociological approaches (Goffman) and sociolinguistic research (e.g., on the functions of pronouns like *we*, *us*, *them*) (Wilson, 1990). Research was carried out into communication within political organizations (e.g., the European Union (Muntigl, Weiss and Wodak, 2000)), as well as on the unique (charismatic) style of politicians (Tony Blair; Fairclough, 2000), on political speeches (commemorative speeches; Ensink and Sauer,

ADVANCES BOX 35.2

What does the term *discourse* mean?

In the following section, you will see the term *discourse* used several times. Indeed, this is a term that has been often used in the chapters of this section. But what does it mean? The term *discourse analysis* has in recent decades penetrated many disciplines, such as sociology, philosophy, history, literary studies, cultural studies, anthropology, psychology and linguistics. In all these disciplines the term carries distinct meanings, including a social science methodology, the label for a whole field, a subdiscipline of linguistics, a critical paradigm and so forth. Reisigl (2004) lists 23 meanings of *discourse* used by Michel Foucault throughout his famous lecture in the Collège de France on 'orders of discourse'. In his lecture, Foucault formulates a number of crucial axioms about the nature and contexts of discursive events (*énoncés*):

I make the assumption that the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized and canalized in every society – and that this is done by way of certain procedures whose task it is to subdue the powers and dangers of discourse, to evade its heavy and threatening materiality.

(Foucault, 1984: 10–11)

Although Foucault refers to many definitions of *discourse* in the course of his lecture, it is equally important to note what discourse is not supposed to mean in Foucault's work – specifically, that it is neither defined thematically nor by a strict system of concepts, and that it is not an object but rather a set of relationships existing between discursive events. These stipulations open the door to a dedicated functional approach, enabling the cultural critic to identify both static and dynamic relationships between discursive events and to address the causes and consequences of historical change.

However, and in contrast with Foucault's more abstract notion, in the tradition of Wittgenstein's *language games* (1967) and Austin's *speech acts* (1960), *discourse* is mainly understood as 'linguistic action', be it written, visual, or oral communication, verbal or non-verbal, undertaken by social actors in a specific setting determined by social rules, norms and conventions. Furthermore, language-specific meanings exist as well as distinct uses within the Anglo-American academic community on the one hand, and European scholarship on the other. For example, in British research, the term *discourse* is frequently used synonymously with *text*, meaning authentic, everyday linguistic communication. The French '*discours*', however, is more focused on the connection between language and thought, for instance meaning 'creation and societal maintenance of complex knowledge systems' (Ehlich, 2000: 162). In German, in functional pragmatics '*Diskurs*' denotes 'structured sets of speech acts' (ibid.). In the analysis of discourse, the meaning of *discourse* is therefore closely linked to the particular research context and theoretical approach.

Following the most important traditions in text linguistics and Discourse Studies, I distinguish between 'discourse' and 'text' in my chapter, and take Jay Lemke's definition (1995, 7ff.) as a starting point:

When I speak about *discourse* in general, I will usually mean the social activity of making meanings with language and other symbolic systems in some

particular kind of situation or setting... On each occasion when the particular meaning characteristic of these discourses is being made, a specific text is produced. Discourses, as social actions more or less governed by social habits, produce texts that will in some ways be alike in their meanings... When we want to focus on the specifics of an event or occasion, we speak of the text; when we want to look at patterns, commonality, relationships that embrace different texts and occasions, we can speak of discourses.

In other words, 'discourse' is defined on a different, more abstract level as 'text'. 'Discourse' implies patterns and commonalities of knowledge and structures whereas a 'text' is a specific and unique realization of a discourse. Texts belong to genres. Thus a discourse on New Labour could be realized in a potentially huge range of genres and texts; for example, in a TV debate on the politics of New Labour, in a New Labour manifesto, in a speech by one of New Labour's representatives, and so forth.

2003; Martin and Wodak, 2003), on right wing political rhetoric (Wodak and Pelinka, 2002), on strategies of manipulation and persuasion (the 2003 Iraq war; Van Dijk, 2006; Chouliaraki, 2007), on interviews with politicians in the media (Clayman and Heritage, 2002), and so forth. Nowadays, many refereed journals publish research from this area (e.g., *Discourse and Society*; *Journal of Language and Politics*).

35.3 Frameworks and methods

Chilton (2004: 201–5) lists 12 propositions which could serve as a possible framework for the field of language and politics. I will discuss the most important five, briefly, in the following and will then focus on positive self- and negative other-presentation in the use of political speeches as one of many genres in the field of language and politics:

- **Political discourse operates indexically**, which implies that one's choice of language (a politician's choice or a layperson's choice) will always – implicitly or explicitly – signal some political distinction. This might be the choice of using a specific accent, of including certain lexical items, or the choice of which address forms to use, and so forth.
- **Political discourse operates as interaction**. Here Chilton states that many features of interaction such as interruptions or overlaps might indicate hierarchy or rank. Moreover, interactions of any kind (such as dialogues, negotiations or debates) serve to find common representations of the world and to mark agreements or disagreements.
- **Modal properties of language subserve political interaction**. Many claims put forward by politicians remain vague; others are claims for truth, confidence, trust, credibility or even legitimization (of actions or positions). Hence, in English, the use of *can*, *must*, *should*, *could*, and so forth implies such statements.

- **Binary conceptualizations** are frequent in political discourse. Most politicians attempt to present themselves in positive ways and to portray their political opponents negatively (van Dijk, 1984; Reisigl and Wodak, 2001). The construction of *us* and *them* lies at the core of persuasive discourse. Binary concepts are also used in attributing a range of characteristics to *us* and *them* (see below) which emphasize positive or negative connotations.
- **Political discourse involves metaphorical reasoning.** Metaphors serve as arguments, for example to legitimize restrictions on immigration, which is often depicted as occurring in *floods* or *waves*, and so forth. Other spatial metaphors (the *path schema*) are regularly used in indicating actions or positions which a political group endorses (*being at cross roads*, *boarding the train*, *choosing directions*, and so forth) (Musolff, 2004).

Chilton's framework could be related to Burkhardt's (1996) dimensions of concrete textual analysis (see Advances Box 35.3 below). For example, modality can be analysed through lexical or visual analysis. Binariness involves lexical choices, rhetorical structures, the analysis of pronouns, of arguments and of address forms, and so forth.

An important claim missing in Chilton's framework relates to the dimension of **persuasion**. Political language and discourse serve to convince hearers/viewers/readers of a specific ideological position, of actions that are to be implemented or of a programme which needs to be endorsed. Hence, all genres in the field of politics necessarily involve persuasive elements which serve to enhance the position and opinion of the text producer in a televised interview, in a parliamentary debate or in a speech given for a specific occasion.

35.3.1 Binariness: *us* and *them* (positive self- and negative other- presentation)

Let us focus a bit more on binariness, 'the discursive construction of 'us' and 'them''. This necessarily reduces the complexity of actions and events to two

ADVANCES BOX 35.3

Burkhardt's procedures

Burkhardt (1996) lists four different procedures as being particularly promising methods and techniques to be used for 'ideological reconstruction' (the various technical terms used here are explained in this volume in Chapters 9–11 on semantics, pragmatics and text linguistics): **lexical-semantic techniques** (analysis of catchwords and value words, of euphemisms, and of ideological polysemy); **sentence and text-semantic procedures** (e.g., analysis of tropes, of 'semantic isotopes', and of integration and exclusion strategies); **pragmatic text-linguistic techniques** (e.g., analysis of forms of address, speech acts, allusions, presuppositions, argumentation, rhetoric, quotations, genres and intertextuality); and finally **semiotic techniques** (icon, symbol and semiotic analysis).

ILLUSTRATION BOX 35.1

President's address

I just completed a meeting with our national security team, and we've received the latest intelligence updates. The deliberate and deadly attacks, which were carried out yesterday against our country, were more than acts of terror. They were acts of war. This will require our country to unite in steadfast determination and resolve. Freedom and democracy are under attack. The American people need to know we're facing a different enemy than we have ever faced. This enemy hides in shadows and has no regard for human life. This is an enemy who preys on innocent and unsuspecting people, then runs for cover, but it won't be able to run for cover forever. This is an enemy that tries to hide, but it won't be able to hide forever. This is an enemy that thinks its harbors are safe, but they won't be safe forever. This enemy attacked not just our people but all freedom-loving people everywhere in the world.

The United States of America will use all our resources to conquer this enemy. We will rally the world. We will be patient. We'll be focused, and we will be steadfast in our determination. This battle will take time and resolve, but make no mistake about it, we will win. The federal government and all our agencies are conducting business, but it is not business as usual. We are operating on heightened security alert. America is going forward, and as we do so, we must remain keenly aware of the threats to our country (George W. Bush, The Deliberate and Deadly Attacks... Were Acts of War, President's Address from Cabinet Room following Cabinet Meeting, 12 September 2001; underlining by RW; <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/gwbush911cabinetroomaddress.htm>)

In a first brief analysis, we can clearly detect the relevant 'social actors' *us* (*we, I, freedom, democracy, America, freedom loving people, our country, United States of America*) and *them* (*enemy, preys on the innocent, runs for cover*; note that the impersonal neutral pronoun *it* is being used, not *they* which would clearly indicate human beings). *We* are active and willing to confront the enemy ('material verbs'), whereas *the enemy* is described as being cowardly, hiding, immoral, a threat to all values of democracy and freedom. Once the opposing groups have been categorized, we can also observe several 'rhetorical techniques' (repetitions of syntactic structures as well as lexical items), the use of **metaphors** to depict 'the enemy' (*hiding in the shadows*), while *us* is attributed by very positive 'flag-words' (*patient, steadfast, freedom-loving*). A **discursive contrast** between light and dark is constructed: the light relates to democracy, freedom, patience, and the whole freedom-loving world; the dark relates to a small group of enemies who are hiding and have *no regard for human life* and who commit *acts of terror* or even *acts of war*. The construction of the contrast serves **argumentative-rhetorical means**: to **convince** the in-group (*us*, all Americans, the freedom-loving world) that acts of war (thus **redefining acts of terror**) were committed against America (which is rhetorically **equated** with the *freedom loving world*), and therefore, a war seems a necessary measure against *the enemy*. This speech marks the preparation for a 'calls-to-arms' (see also Young and Fitzgerald, 2006: 10–33).

distinct groups, one of which – us – is deemed to be good, the other – them – bad. Thus, binarity serves important functions in politics by including some and excluding others ('Othering') and/or by defining a distinct group of victims and a group of perpetrators who can be blamed for something ('Scapegoating').

In the brief analysis of positive self- and negative other-presentation above, I applied the following five questions as guidelines (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 44) which have proved very useful:

- (i) How are social actors – either individual persons or groups – linguistically constructed by being named (**nomination**)?
- (ii) What positive or negative traits, qualities and features are attributed to the linguistically constructed social actors (**predication**)?
- (iii) Through what arguments and **argumentation** schemes do specific persons or social groups try to justify or de-legitimize claims containing specific nominations and predications (e.g., claims of discrimination of others)?
- (iv) From what perspective or point of view are these nominations, predications and argumentations expressed (**perspectivation**)?
- (v) Are the respective utterances (nominations, predications and argumentations) articulated overtly, are they intensified or are they mitigated (**mitigation versus intensification**)?

Discursive strategies for positive self- and negative other-representation (Wodak, 2001)

Table 3

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Devices</i>
Referential / nomination	Construction of in-groups and out-groups	• membership categorization • biological, naturalizing and depersonalizing metaphors and metonymies • synecdoches (whole for part, part for whole)
Predication	Labelling social actors positively or negatively	• stereotypical, evaluative attributions of negative or positive traits • implicit and explicit predicates
Argumentation	Justification of positive or negative attributions	• topoi used to justify inclusion or exclusion
Perspectivation, framing or discourse representation	Expressing involvement Positioning speaker's point of view	• reporting, description, narration or quotation of events and utterances
Intensification, mitigation	Modifying the epistemic status of a proposition	• intensifying or mitigating the illocutionary force of utterances

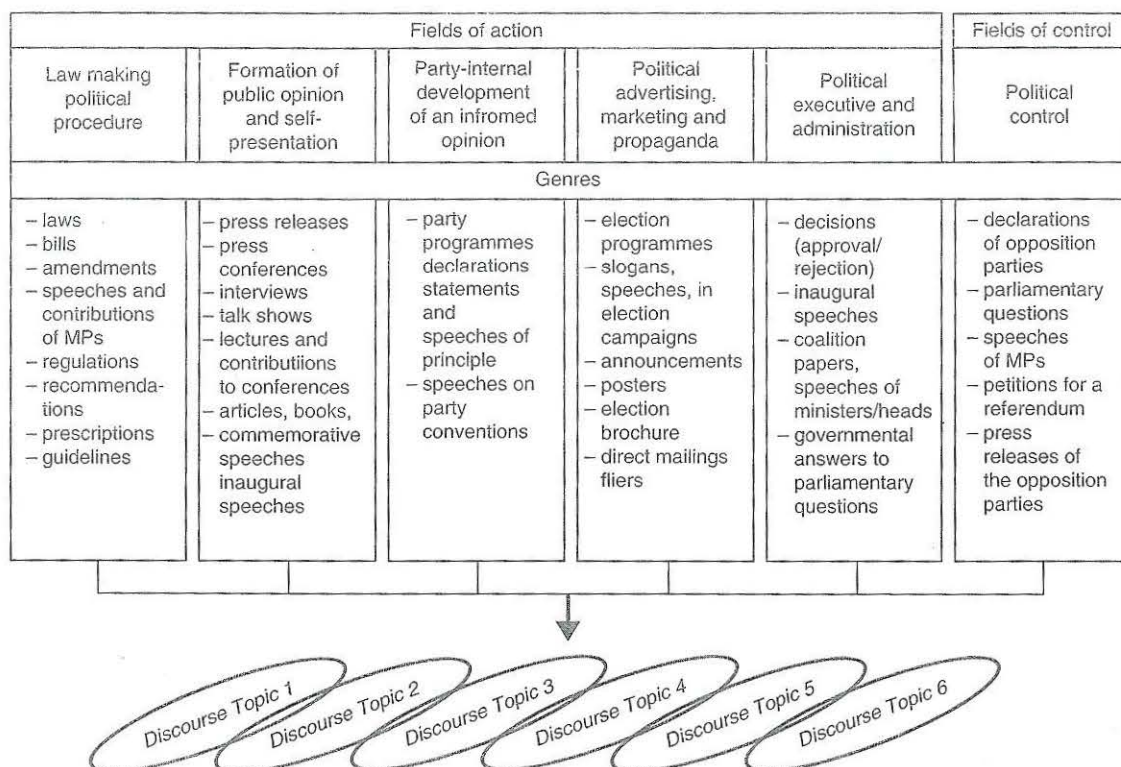


FIGURE 35.2

Some genres in the field of politics (Reisigl and Wodak 2001: 38)

Table 35.1 contains some of the linguistic, pragmatic and rhetorical devices used in political discourse to realize the five discursive strategies mentioned – this list serves as a possible stimulus for further engagement with analysis in the field of political discourse.

35.3.2 Context and genres

Let us now turn to the context of speech events or of interactions. I suggest considering four levels of context in the concrete textual analysis (Wodak 2001):

- (i) the **immediate, language or text internal co-text** (i.e., Bush's speech, 12 September 2001);
- (ii) the **intertextual and interdiscursive** relationship between utterances, texts, genres and discourses (i.e., other speeches and media reporting on the specific speech, reporting on 9/11 or other speeches related to 9/11);
- (iii) **extralinguistic social/sociological variables** and institutional frames of a specific 'context of situation' (the setting, other political parties, TV);

- (iv) the broader sociopolitical and historical contexts, which the discursive practices are embedded in and related to (events surrounding and leading up to 9/11).

Hence, a discourse about a specific topic (calls-to-arms after 9/11 or a commemoration of the end of the Second World War, see below) can find its starting point within one field of action and proceed through another one. Discourses and discourse topics spread to different fields and discourses. They cross between fields, overlap, refer to each other or are in some other way socio-functionally linked with each other. We can represent the relationship between fields of action, genres and discourse topics with the example of the field of politics (Figure 35.2). In this way, it becomes obvious how many different genres can be employed for political means.

Each genre which relates to one of the macro-functions defined above thus follows conventions defined culturally and politically (see analysis of texts in Illustration Boxes 35.1–35.3).

35.4 A second example: Political speeches at commemorative events

In an extensive and elaborate typology of political speeches, Martin Reisigl (2008a, b) defines a speech as 'a structured verbal chain of coherent speech acts uttered on a special social occasion for a specific purpose by a single person, and addressed to a more or less specific audience'. Speeches may differ from each other in length, and in terms of the respective occasion (including time and place) of the speech, the primary and secondary topics, the speech's manifest and latent functions, the identity and function of the speaker, the addressees, the form of presentation and degree of preparedness, and the speech's style and structure, depending on the respective language, culture and political position or ideology of the speaker and the audience.

Speeches are rarely spontaneous as they are given in formal situations. Classic rhetoric distinguishes three forms of oratory: the judicial (*genus iudiciale*), the deliberative (*genus deliberativum*) and the epideictic (*genus demonstrativum*).¹ According to the standard scheme, judicial oratory is focused temporally on the past, and thematically on justice or injustice. Deliberative oratory is connected with the future, and thematically related to expediency or harmfulness. Epideictic oratory is temporally linked to the present, and thematically concerned with honour and disgrace – commemorative speeches belong to this type (Plett, 2001: 17–18).

Much research, however, has illustrated that the theoretical separation has to be taken as a simplification (Reisigl, 1998; Wodak and De Cillia, 2007). Since the first theory on rhetorical genre by Aristotle, political systems, conditions and circumstances have changed and become increasingly complex. Thus forms, types and functions of political speeches have altered accordingly.

Commemorative speeches are delivered on public days of remembrance, which primarily serve to retrieve the past for the present (e.g., *Remembrance Sunday*, commemorating the First and Second World Wars in the UK). They

are often highly epideictic in nature, that is, they assign praise or blame to certain moments of a nation's past or present. However, epideictic oratory does not exclusively serve as a vehicle for the linguistic self-presentation and self-promotion of the speakers; it also has an 'educational' function, that is, it seeks to convey certain political values in order to create consensus and a spirit of community which in turn serve as a model for future political actions (Perelman, 1980: 28ff.). In addition, commemorative speeches contain deliberative elements and/or argumentative insertions. They sometimes even exhibit traces of judicial rhetoric, if a given speech attempts to justify past or present problematic actions and events.

35.4.1 The year 2005

Let us start with the fourth level of context (Section 35.3.2.) – the socio-political and historical circumstances: 2005 marked an important commemorative year in Austria – 60 years since the end of the Second World War, 50 years since the signing of the Austrian State Treaty, and ten years since Austria's accession to the European Union, the second of which had made a democratic and free Second Austrian Republic possible (the Allied forces left Austria after its declaration of neutrality in October 1955). In the following, I will consider two extracts of one political speech by the then Austrian chancellor, Dr Wolfgang Schüssel, which attempted to establish a hegemonic stance towards the Nazi past (the one official and accepted version), the widespread participation of Austrians in Nazi war crimes, and the question of 'who the victims were'.

We proceed to the next level of context – the speech event. Chancellor Schüssel's speech was given on 27 April 2005, as part of a commemorative event in the Redoutensäle of the Hofburg (the previous palace of the Habsburg emperors) in Vienna. The occasion was the sixtieth anniversary of the 'birth hour' of the Second Republic, in other words the date of the proclamation of a provisional Austrian state government recognized by the Allied Forces, eight days before the end of the Second World War. The proclamation declared that the Austrian republic was 'reconstituted' and that 'the *Anschluss* forced on the Austrian people in 1938' was 'null and void'.

The following, very brief, analysis (first level of context) illustrates how the speaker views this history, understands it, presents it and therefore formulates/constructs it anew throughout the whole speech (for an extensive analysis, see Wodak and De Cillia, 2007). I focus primarily on the use of metaphors related to birth, rebirth and birth hours which I deem to be key conceptual metaphors of this commemorative discourse.

This text is clearly marked by the use of **metaphors**. Moreover, the abundance of evaluative adjectives intensifies such metaphors and complements the cognitive, conceptual frames with emotions and values. Without being able to present the details of the ongoing debate surrounding the theories about and analysis of metaphors, I would like to emphasize the function of conceptual frames, realized in metaphorical expressions, for the discursive construction of national identity through commemorative speeches (Wodak et al., 2009).

ILLUSTRATION BOX 35.2

Chancellor Schüssel's speech (1)

Mr President, Right Honourable Cardinal, President of the National Assembly! I have come to... for the initiation of our festive gathering and can put on record that the 27th of April 1945 was, first and foremost, a day of joy. It was the birth hour of the Second Republic, ...

The 27th of April was, in Vienna... in any case, a spring day 60 years ago, in ten days the Second World War in Europe will have ended, ten days ago the big Austrian parties were founded. Their founders returned from concentration camps and detention, and together with other democrats created the Second Republic. The drama of this six-year war and the trauma of the National Socialist terror regime, however, throw sombre shadows onto the cradle of this red-white-red rebirth, but the child lives. In the midst of ruins, need, hunger and desperation, lives this small, new, Austria, because on this day everyone looks ahead. The nightmare is over. But the horror was not over for everyone, and not every horror was over. The displacements continued, in all of Europe, especially in Central Europe over ten million people were displaced, lost their home; whole convoys of refugees were on the move looking for a new home. (Speech by Austrian Federal Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel, 27.4.2005, Hofburg, Vienna.)

The ostensible reason for the speech was the Austrian Declaration of Independence on 27 April 1945, which took place before the surrender of the Nazi regime on 8 May 1945. This political event is apparently conducive to descriptions as a 'birth' or 'rebirth': the 27 April is the *birth hour of the Second Republic* and later *The drama of this six-year war and the trauma of the National Socialist terror regime, however, throw sombre shadows onto the cradle of this red-white-red rebirth, but the child lives*. Later still, he speaks of the *birth hour of a new, democratic Austria*.

The re-establishment of the Second Republic is thus expressed in the **conceptual cognitive frame** of a natural, biological event through the **anthropomorphizing metaphor** of birth and rebirth. A political entity thus becomes a child, and the 'founding fathers' of the Second Republic appear as parents. However, there are no mothers present or evoked which causes the metaphor to appear somewhat stilted.

Let us take the five questions (Section 35.3.1) as guideline for a brief analysis: The **political actors** who really made independence possible do not appear, they are absent, **back-grounded** and deleted; i.e., the Allied forces who defeated the Nazi regime and forced its surrender a short time later. The main actors are 'the founders', returning from concentration camps, and 'other democrats', thus in contrast and opposition to the Nazi-regime.

The birth is constructed as **drama** – a further metaphorical perspective which transforms the genre of the speech into a story, with a happy ending (*the child lives in spite of terror, sombre shadows, ruins, hunger, need and desperation*). The Nazi-regime is labelled as a *nightmare*; the Nazi-regime is thus defined as a static subconscious phenomenon. Active agents exist after the Nazi-regime was over: as *displaced persons* and *refugees* who are nevertheless depicted in passive roles. The rebirth is discursively constructed as a miracle (supported through the genre of a story), in spite of all the negative circumstances.

These labels and attributions serve to construct a new narrative about Austria's history, to position arguments that nobody had been able to do anything against *the nightmare*; and that a new beginning, a *rebirth*, had happened. In this way, perpetrators were backgrounded, and only the victims were made explicit.

ADVANCES BOX 35.4

Scenarios

Musolff introduces the concept of 'metaphor scenarios' to grasp the attempt of (re)defining historical trajectories:

We can characterize a 'scenario' as a set of assumptions made by competent members of a discourse community about 'typical' aspects of a source situation; e.g., its participants and their roles, the 'dramatic' storylines and outcomes, and conventional evaluations of whether they count as successful or unsuccessful, permissible or illegitimate, etc. These source-based assumptions are mapped onto the respective target concepts.

(Musolff, 2006: 28)

Scenarios relate to collective experiences and assist in constructing coherent representations of the past (e.g. the notion of 'model' or 'frame' in Chapter 9, Advances Box 9.1). These cognitive theories and concepts, however, do not explain the mass-psychological, highly emotional, illocutionary force of such images. To be able to explain why specific narratives succeed and others do not, a **discourse-historical, interdisciplinary analysis** must consider other contextual factors as well. By addressing certain topics or events which are thought to be part of collective experiences or memories, the speakers intentionally trigger hegemonic context models and scenarios.

Let us now look more closely at how the speech presents the victims:

ILLUSTRATION BOX 35.3

Chancellor Schüssel's speech (2)

The victims of this horror must be named: 100,000 Austrians died in the concentration camps or in captivity, most of them Jews. Many had to lose their lives because of their political or religious convictions, also thousands of Roma, Sinti, ill and disabled people were murdered. 50,000 civilians were killed, 100,000 political prisoners lost years of their lives. 250,000 soldiers were killed, 250,000 came back from the war badly injured or mutilated, and in the following years 500,000 prisoners of war had to pay for this criminal war having been started.

Noteworthy here are, among other features, the **lexical means** used to refer to the deaths of victims, the choice of verbs; moreover, which function the numbers might have and how the group of victims is constructed in detail (hence focusing on nomination and predication):

100,000 Austrians died in the concentration camps or in captivity, most of them Jews; many had to lose their lives, Roma, Sinti, ill and disabled people were murdered. Civilians were killed, political prisoners lost years of their lives, soldiers were killed or came back from the war badly injured or mutilated, prisoners of war had to pay for the war.

Only once is *murder* explicitly mentioned. This verbal treatment of the crimes of National Socialism leads to a euphemization of the deaths of those murdered in the concentration camps; the use of *had to*, for example, gives the impression that the loss of life was necessary and not the choice of a group of individuals to kill another group of individuals. The perpetrators are not named – passivization and agent deletion make it possible to keep the originators of these crimes obscured, and reinforce the impression that the events were unavoidable and fated.

The whole speech of which I only present two brief examples in this chapter constructs a stark contrast: the political event of the Declaration of Independence is represented metaphorically as a *rebirth*; a metaphorical scenario which constructs a 'creation myth', contextualized in a story frame. A child, or even better a newborn child, is of course innocent. The metaphor thus carries an additional meaning – not only is Austria newly born, it is also innocent like a newborn child. On the other hand, the historical events before and immediately following are placed in the fateful context of *horror* and *nightmare* of a *dark age*. The cognitive frame is that of natural disasters or fateful events, which thus represents political events as immutable by humans.

This is also shown linguistically in the almost continuous agent deletion. De-historicization and de-politicization of historical events are the ultimate result, realized through the argumentative strategies presented in this brief analysis. All this makes a communal 'commemoration' possible, including the perpetrators and their families. This is because the perpetrators are not named, and because in the end no one is responsible for the crimes, since the events are constructed using argumentative fallacies as apparently fateful and generally unavoidable natural disasters. The shift in genres, combining the epideictic genre with a very simple story frame, reinforces the dramatic illocutionary effect and constructs a new temporal and causal sequence of facts. Such speeches construct consensus and do not alienate possible political opponents; in this way the official purpose of commemoration is ultimately well fulfilled.

This analysis illustrates that political meanings are always created in contexts. Hence text analysis necessarily includes context analysis on the four levels mentioned. All dimensions of language can be used in persuasive and manipulative ways, depending on the respective context, language, culture, ideologies, topic, functions, speakers, audience and occasion.

To conclude, consider the extract of the speech, and a brief analysis of it, given in Illustration Box 35.4, as additional evidence for the claims made above. This is a speech given in 1986 by Ronald Reagan and delivered at the Arlington Cemetery. It was part of the national Memorial Day commemoration (commemorating the Vietnam War; see Slavickova, forthcoming, for details), at which it is traditional for the sitting US president to address the nation. This text extract illustrates similar but also different discursive strategies, like the text extracts above from the Austrian context. The similarity is created through the fact that the Vietnam War and its consequences present a huge trauma for the US population which is frequently tabooed or silenced. The differences are due to the significantly different culture of rhetoric in the United States (see Young and Fitzgerald, 2006).

ILLUSTRATION BOX 35.4

Ronald Reagan's speech (1986)

I know that many veterans of Vietnam will gather today, some of them perhaps by the wall. And they're still helping each other on. They were quite a group, the boys of Vietnam – boys who fought a terrible and vicious war without enough support from home, boys who were dodging bullets while we debated the efficacy of the battle. It was often our poor who fought in that war; it was the unpampered boys of the working class who picked up the rifles and went on the march. They learned not to rely on us; they learned to rely on each other. And they were special in another way: They chose to be faithful. They chose to reject the fashionable scepticism of their time. They chose to believe and answer the call of duty. They had the wild, wild courage of youth. They seized certainty from the heart of an ambivalent age; they stood for something.

And we owe them something, those boys. We owe them first a promise: That just as they did not forget their missing comrades, neither, ever, will we. And there are other promises. We must always remember that peace is a fragile thing that needs constant vigilance. We owe them a promise to look at the world with a steady gaze and, perhaps, a resigned toughness, knowing that we have adversaries in the world and challenges and the only way to meet them and maintain the peace is by staying strong.

Generally speaking, similar to the Austrian text, there is strong use of third-person pronouns to refer to the dead which creates a sense of **vagueness and distance**. The stylistic shifts from *we/our* to *they/their* evoke a stark dichotomy of the living vis-à-vis the dead. The psychological effect is further reinforced by the sharp shift in **anaphora** from paragraph 1 to paragraph 2: the experience of *they* implies the moral obligation of *we*, and the intensity of their use highlights the discursively constructed **contrast** between the two sections. Also foregrounded is the shift in **tense**, from past in most of paragraph 1 to present. Significantly, however, while the word *they* is clearly attributed (Vietnam casualties and veterans), the word *we* remains vague and lacks a specified referent in both paragraphs.

Indeed, it seems that the first-person plural of paragraph 1 implies a different **subject** than that of paragraph 2. The *we* here seems to be the Washington political elite, i.e., Reagan's presidential predecessors. Reagan ventures an implicit reproach, by weak implication, also reproaching himself as a member of that elite, in keeping with Wodak and de Cillia's (2007) claim, that commemorative speeches 'assign praise or blame to certain moments of a nation's past or present' (see also extracts in Illustration Boxes 35.2 and 35.3: **historical we**). However, the attribution of the first-person plural remains ambiguous: its referent could be the American public in general, or possibly the mass media, or both. In any case, Reagan appears to be using – for rhetorical purposes – the point of view of many war veterans who accused their leaders of neglect (and who still need to be *helped on*), and/or of those who at the time accused non-combatant Americans of inadequate moral support. Thus distinct groups are constructed via **nomination and predication strategies**. Moreover, he is lending **voice** to *our poor*, i.e., the *unpampered boys of the working class*. Such

'critique' is only achieved, however, through the engendering of distance. Reagan's discourse sets up a relatively safe point of view (strategy of perspectivation) for one who is in a position to distance himself both spatially and temporally, and hence ideologically, from the subject of his mild rebuke. (Reagan was governor of California for much of the Vietnam War, which had ended a decade before this speech.)

The speech collectivizes the armed forces (volunteers and conscripts) in to a group as *the boys in Vietnam*, *working class boys* with a monopoly on good and honourable values: with a unified faith, beliefs, courage, and sense of certainty in *an ambivalent age*, who *stood for something*. The declarative style is reinforced by the use of definite articles which present potentially contentious assertions as non-negotiable or objective, thus employing epistemic modality; the predication through (intensified) attributes is also salient here: *the unpampered boys*, *the fashionable scepticism of their time*, *the wild wild courage of youth*.

In sum, a glorious, homogeneous identity, resting on selfless sacrifice, is discursively related to the burden of debt such sacrifice entails for future generations. The language of war thereby presupposes the inevitability of debt and repayment through further conflict and death which is maintained via the familiar amnesiac tropes and *topoi* (for more detail, see Slavickova, forthcoming, who analyses the Memorial Day commemorative speeches of three US presidents, i.e., Bill Clinton, Georg W. Bush and Ronald Reagan).

Recommended readings

Reisigl and Wodak's *Discourse and Discrimination* (2001) presents the Discourse-Historical Approach in CDA in much detail, with many, different examples of 'Language and/in Politics' (news reports, TV interviews, manifestos, spontaneous conversations at election rallies, etc.). Chilton (2004), *Analyzing Political Discourse*, is an excellent introduction to the field, with a focus on British politics, while employing a cognitive approach to (Critical) Discourse Analysis. *The Discursive Construction of History: Remembering the Wehrmacht's War of Annihilation* (Heer et al., 2008) allows insight into the complex debates about Germany's and Austria's post-war history and related narratives. Many different genres are analyzed in an interdisciplinary way to be able to provide a multi-faceted picture of events and positionings. Krzyżanowski and Oberhuber (2007) provides us with a detailed case study of the many debates and controversies at the European Convention 2002/03 which allows insight into the 'functioning and staging' of politics. Wodak (2009) presents a comprehensive overview of the state of art of research on language and politics, as well as an analysis of everyday discourses in the European Parliament which are juxtaposed with a multimodal analysis of the US TV soap *The West Wing*.

Note

- 1 'Rhetoric' is here intended to denote both the *ars bene dicendi et scribendi*, i.e., the practical art of speaking and writing well in public, and the theory of eloquence.

as party programmes (Blasch, 2007). We are even able to listen to particular pop songs which politicians (or their ghost writers) have created to promote themselves (e.g., H. C. Strache, an extreme right wing Austrian politician: <http://www.hcstrache.at/index.php?style=13&PHPSESSID=bb29df0f70fc6279cb6336a571ab1724>). If we wish to contact members of parliament or even the President of the United States, we are able to email them or chat with them on discussion forums specifically constructed for such purposes (Wright, 2005).

The BBC and other national broadcasting organizations transmit special programmes dedicated to bringing parliamentary debates right into our living rooms (BBC Parliament); such programmes convey the impression of allowing the listener or viewer to be part of decision-making processes and debates although only a few snapshots of the politicians' life are actually represented in the media:

And after spending an entire day campaigning with the Conservative leader William Hague, the presenter of *Channel Four News*, Jon Snow, calculated that the total amount of time spent with members of the 'public' was a mere forty minutes.

(Paxman, 2003: 93)

Weblogs of individual politicians give insight into daily and *quasi* private thoughts (Myers, Chapter 25 in this volume); and fictional films about important political events ('which nobody will ever forget') construct plausible narratives to keep memories alive or to offer explanations of unsolved cases (e.g., *JFK* by Oliver Stone or *The Life of a President* by Aaron Sorkin).

The above examples all shed light on the life and work of politicians from the outside. These are official genres, designed for the public and demonstrating the many ways in which politicians want to present themselves, stage their work and 'perform', and therefore how they like to be perceived by their various audiences ('frontstage'; see Goffman, 1981):

A correctly staged and performed character leads the audience to impute a self to a performed character, but this imputation – this self – is a *product* of a scene that comes off, and not the *cause* of it. The self, then, as a performed character, is not an organic thing that has a specific location, whose fundamental fate is to be born, to mature, and to die; it is a dramatic effect arising diffusely from a scene that is presented, and the characteristic issue, the crucial concern, is whether it will be credited or discredited.

(Goffman, 1959: 252–3)

These activities follow specific norms and rules, are part of the 'field of politics' (in Pierre Bourdieu's sense; see below) and are ritualized, as Murray Edelman claimed in his seminal book *The Symbolic Use of Politics* (Edelman, 1967). However, we have no access to the 'backstage', to the 'politics *du couloir*', and to the many conversations and gossip in the corridors when politicians meet informally (Krzyżanowski and Oberhuber, 2007; Wodak, 2009).